

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 SSM-03 AID-05 AGRE-00 TRSE-00
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O P 211333Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2796
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 203
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
CIA WASHDC
COMSIXTHFLT
COMPHIBRON SIX
COM THREE FOUR MAU
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 0261

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JANUARY 20-21

REF: BEIRUT 0218 (DTG 191404Z JAN 77)

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1. SUMMARY. THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE AUTHORIZES
SEARCHES FOR UNCOLLECTED HEAVY WEAPONS.
THE CHRISTIAN KFUR FRONT BEGINS A THREE-DAY CONFERENCE TO
CONSIDER "OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE." SEVERAL ARAB AID DELEGATIONS
ARE IN TOWN. THE HEAD OF A VISITING FRENCH TEAM OUTLINES ITS
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REBUILDING THE BEIRUT CENTRAL BUSINESS
DISTRICT. A LEBANESE OFFICIAL RELEASES REVISED STATISTICS

SHOWING AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES SUFFERED \$4.3 MILLION IN DAMAGES DURING THE FIGHTING. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL MEET ON JAN 24 TO CONSIDER FORMATION OF A COUNCIL FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE ON ARMS AND PALESTINIANS. THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE MET ON JAN 20. ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR, IT DECIDED THAT THE ASF WOULD BEGIN SEARCHES IN BEIRUT, THE SUBURBS, THE PALESTINIAN CAMPS, AND OTHER AREAS FOR HEAVY ARMS WHICH HAD NOT BEEN COLLECTED AS SCHEDULED. (WE HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT THE ASF HAS YET IMPLEMENTED ANY SUCH SEARCHES, ALREADY SUPPOSED TO START AFTER THE JAN 12 DEADLINE FOR THE VOLUNTARY SURRENDER OF WEAPONS.) ACCORDING TO RIGHTIST AL BAYRAQ, THE COMMITTEE ALSO DECIDED TO EVACUATE ALL THE PALESTINIANS IN DAMOUR TO THE SOUTH. AFTER THE MEETING, THE SAUDI REPRESENTATIVE, GENERAL ALI EL CHAER, TOLD THE PRESS THE COMMITTEE WOULD MEET AGAIN ON JAN 29 TO STUDY THE COLLECTION OF "MEDIUM ARMS" SUCH AS LIGHT MORTARS. SOME PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THE COMMITTEE WILL BEGIN TO STUDY IN DETAIL HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE 1969 CAIRO ACCORDS.

3. KFUR FRONT CONFERENCE. A THREE-DAY CONFERENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN KFUR FRONT OPENED ON JAN 21 IN BROUMANNA, ABOUT FIVE MILES EAST OF BEIRUT. AMONG THOSE ATTENDING WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RIGHTIST "UNITED COMMAND," THE PHALANGE PARTY, THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY, THE TANZIM, THE FRONT OF THE NORTH, THE MARONITE LEAGUE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF LEBANESE MONKS, AND THE CONFIDENTIAL

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KASLIK RESEARCH GROUP. ON JAN 20, A PREPARATORY COMMITTEE HAD ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE SPECIFYING THE CONGRESS WOULD: A) DEFINE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE; B) REVISE ITS "INTERNAL ORGANIZATION;" AND C) PREPARE FOR AN ENLARGED NATIONAL CONGRESS. THE RIGHTIST "AMAL" REPORTED ON JAN 21 THAT CONTACTS WERE UNDERWAY TO EXPAND THE KFUR FRONT TO INCLUDE PRO-SYRIAN ELEMENTS OF THE NASSERISTE THE BAATH PARTY.

4. MOSLEMS OPPOSE DECENTRALIZATION. FOLLOWING A MEETING OF THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL ON JANUARY 19, SPOKESMAN CHAFIC WAZZAN SAID THE COUNCIL OPPOSES ANY FORM OF DECENTRALIZATION (WHICH THE KFUR FRONT CONFERENCE IS LIKELY TO ENDORSE).

5. FOREIGN AID: VISITORS. FOREIGN AID EXPERTS ARE FLOCKING TO LEBANON. ON JAN 20 PRESIDENT SARKIS RECEIVED THE HEAD OF THE KUWAITI FUND FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WHO HAD JUST ARRIVED. THE SAME DAY PRIME MINISTER

SALIM AL-HOSS MET WITH THREE OFFICIALS OF THE ARAB LEAGUE'S CENTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, WHO ARE HERE STUDYING DAMAGED INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING INDUSTRIAL HOLDING COMPANIES. IBRAHIM CHEAITO, MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY AND HYDRAULIC RESOURCES, MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE ARAB FUND FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TO DISCUSS NEW EQUIPMENT FOR THE PORT OF BEIRUT (SEE SITREP OF JANUARY 18-19).

6. FOREIGN AID: GOL PERCEPTIONS. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR REPORTED ON JAN 21 THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S RECENT TRIPS ABROAD HAD GUARANTEED THAT "REQUIRED AID WOULD BE ABUNDANTLY PROVIDED...AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE." ACCORDING TO THE PAPER, THE AID WOULD TAKE FOUR FORMS: GRANTS FROM ARAB STATES; FOREIGN EQUIPMENT PURCHASED BY ARAB STATES; LOANS FROM ARAB DEVELOPMENT FUNDS; AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE WORLD BANK.
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7. FRENCH EXPERT GIVES PRESS CONFERENCE. PIERRE
CONSIGNY, HEAD OF THE FRENCH TECHNICAL TEAM VISITING
LEBANON, GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE ON JAN 19 AND
RECOMMENDED THAT LEBANON:

-- REBUILD THE BEIRUT CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
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IN ITS PREVIOUS AREA AND AT ITS PREVIOUS POPULATION
DENSITY.

-- DEVELOP A SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BY
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF BUSES, SINCE SUBWAY
WOULD BE TOO EXPENSIVE.

-- DEVELOP A MASTER PLAN WHICH WOULD DEFINE THE
FUNCTION OF ALL THE COUNTRY'S PORTS AND WOULD PROVIDE
FOR THE EXPANSION OF BEIRUT PORT TO THE EAST.

8. CONSIGNY ALSO RECOMMENDED ENACTMENT OF NEW LAWS
TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF TENANTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS
WHILE THE CENTER CITY WAS BEING REBUILT. THE ASSOCIATION
OF BEIRUT BUSINESSMEN HAS ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO ANNUL
AN ARTICLE OF THE CIVIL CODE WHICH SPECIFIES THAT IF
A TENANT ABANDONS A SEVERELY DAMAGED STRUCTURE, HE
LOSES HIS RIGHT TO OCCUPY IT. THE GOVERNMENT HAD
PREVIOUSLY SUSPENDED THIS ARTICLE, WHICH IN EFFECT
CAUSES A COMMERCIAL TENANT TO LOSE HIS "KEY-MONEY,"
A SORT OF DOWN-PAYMENT WHICH CAN AMOUNT TO MORE THAN
TEN-YEARS RENT.

9. REVISED COOPERATIVE STATISTICS. ON JAN 20
CAMILLE KOBEH, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF COOPERATIVES,
RELEASED CORRECTED STATISTICS ON LOSSES SUFFERED BY
COOPERATIVES (SEE SITREP OF JAN 19). KOBEH SPECIFIED
THAT COOPERATIVES HAD SUFFERED ABOUT \$6.1 MILLION
IN DAMAGES DURING THE FIGHTING -- \$1.8 MILLION FOR
CONSUMER COOPERATIVES AND \$4.3 MILLION FOR

AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES.

10. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
WILL MEET ON JAN 24 TO CONSIDER A BILL GRANTING
AMNESTY FOR CRIMES COMMITTED DURING THE RECENT
FIGHTING, ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR. THE COUNCIL
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WILL ALSO "STUDY IN DETAIL" FORMATION OF THE PLANNED
COUNCIL FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT. THE PRIME
MINISTER HAS SAID THIS COUNCIL, WHICH HAS LONG BEEN
ANNOUNCED BY PRESIDENT SARKIS, WILL COORDINATE ALL
RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON.
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